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**Legislation Committee
Sept. 12, 2008
Minutes**

Chair Rubin called the committee to order at 10:45 a.m. Members in attendance: Chu, Haggerty, Halsted, Lempert, Spering, Worth, and Yeager. Also in attendance: Commissioners Bates, Mackenzie and Tissier.

Minutes

Minutes of the July 11, 2008 meeting were approved following a motion by Commissioner Worth that was seconded by Commissioner Halsted.

Legislative History

Rebecca Long reviewed bills on the governor's desk that MTC supports. Chair Rubin asked Commissioner Bates, as a former member of the State Assembly, his take on the current budget delay. He said California is just one of three states requiring two-thirds legislative approval for a budget, and the only state giving its governor line-item veto authority. He noted that the Democrats, who are the majority party in both legislative houses, have advanced a number of proposals to cut spending and raise revenues; that Governor Schwarzenegger has shown leadership in agreeing to the idea of limited revenue increases to balance the budget. It is the Republican legislators who have become entrenched in the idea of no revenue increases who are largely responsible for the impasse.

State Legislation

State Prop. 1A - Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century – Ms. Long said that the \$9.95B bonds measure contains \$760 million for local rail connections to the high-speed rail system. The funds are allocated using a formula that distributes one-third on the basis of each entity's share of track miles, one-third on the basis of annual vehicles miles, and one-third on the basis of the number of passengers. The Bay Area operators' share would be approximately \$406 million, or 53 percent of the statewide total. The bond has the potential to reduce Bay Area and statewide vehicle congestion, divert air passenger demand away from congested airports and onto rail, reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions, and generate funds for Bay Area transit operators. Commissioner Spering moved a position of "support" that was seconded by Commissioner Halsted and referred to Commission. Commissioner Haggerty abstained.

Measure B - Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Sales Tax

Ellen Griffin said that if approved by two-thirds of Santa Clara County's voters, the 30-year, 1/8 cent, sales tax will pay for operating and maintenance costs associated with extending BART into Santa Clara County. In response to Commissioner Bates asking about cost to taxpayers, Commissioner Chu estimated approximately \$39 to household in the county per year. He said the county previously sought allowance to raise taxes by less than 1/4 cent. Commissioner Haggerty moved a position of "support" that was seconded by Commissioner Yeager and unanimously referred to Commission.

Measure Q - Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) Sales Tax Proposal.

Ms. Griffin said it was placed on the November ballot in Marin and Sonoma counties by the SMART District and calls for a quarter-cent sales tax for a passenger rail system and connecting bicycle/pedestrian pathway along 70 miles of Northwestern Pacific (NWP) Railroad right-of-way. As a special tax, the measure requires two-thirds approval from voters in both counties. The SMART corridor is included in MTC Resolution 3434, the Bay Area's transit expansion blueprint. Measure Q will provide the local funding leverage necessary to attract additional matching funds at all levels of government. It is a critical element for the North Bay's efforts to provide travel options in the crowded Highway 101 Corridor. Commissioner Worth moved a "support" position that was seconded by Commissioner Halsted and unanimously referred to Commission.

State Budget Update

Ms. Long said that Commissioner Bates had already hit the high points.

Federal Legislation

FY 2008-09 Federal Appropriations

Randy Rentschler anticipated continuing resolutions to occur until the presidential election is over and a new Administration is in office. Regarding the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), he said the recent \$8 billion bailout "gives notice" to the next Congress about transportation authorization. In response to Commissioner Chu's question about the HTF being drained now, Mr. Rentschler said that the explanation included a combination of fuel and gasoline prices and a decrease by \$50B/year in the sale of big rigs.

Tom Bulger's Report

Mr. Rentschler highlighted the Senate Democratic Caucus Transportation Infrastructure Forum on July 30 and the need to adopt a comprehensive transportation authorization bill.

Other Business/Public Comment/Adjourn

Under other business, Commissioner Haggerty reiterated his interest in using less paper and instead having flash drives available for commissioners to use with their own laptops; he requested a report from staff on the matter. There was no public comment. The committee's next meeting was scheduled for Oct. 10, 2008. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:15 a.m.